

# MESSENGER

ANNUAL APPEAL &amp; PRAYER GUIDE



## THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, SOW THE SEEDS OF HOPE

Dear friend,

My heart is full of gratitude. I know that your prayers, encouragement, and partnership are the fuel that keeps Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) moving forward. We are constantly reminded that the incredible work being done around the globe is not just our work, but a collective effort made possible by faithful people like you. Thank you for being part of the important work of spreading the gospel!

I am equally grateful for the many cross-cultural workers, staff, board members, and volunteers who bring EMM's mission into focus through specific tasks that share the good news of Jesus. This past year, EMM workers and volunteers engaged in 29 countries with 12 unreached people groups.


But the need remains vast. Right now, more than 3 billion people still don't have access to the gospel or proximity to a follower of Jesus who can share this good news with them. Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few," (Matthew 9:37). These realities compel us to keep going.

Your financial partnership doesn't just fund a single project; it fuels our Impact Fund. This is the critical support system that allows our work to flourish by providing:

- Training and discipleship for new workers to be raised up and sent.
- Administrative support and well-being care for long-term workers.
- Grants to our church partners around the world.
- A rapidly growing Advance program that disciples and sends young people into short-term mission with seasoned workers.

**Would you prayerfully consider making a gift today to sustain this life-changing momentum?** To give today, you can visit [EMM.ORG/GIVE](https://emm.org/give) or use the enclosed reply envelope. Thank you again for being a vital member of the EMM family. We are deeply grateful for your trust, your prayers, and your commitment to the Great Commission.

With heartfelt gratitude and in Christ's service,



Dr. Marvin Lorenzana  
President

P.S. Jesus commanded us to go (Matthew 28). I know we can't all go, but your contribution spreads the good news of Jesus through many who are prepared and willing to go. Please give as the Lord leads.




# THE OPEN FIELD

Many of EMM's supporters and missionaries have come from agricultural backgrounds. This metaphor — Four Fields of Kingdom Growth — is a helpful way to think about how together we are able to play a part in sowing seeds of hope around the world. Any good farmer knows that a field isn't actually empty, but needs work to prepare the soil to plant the seed. This step may take time — for missionaries, this step might take years of working the soil until finally it's ready. This requires perseverance and commitment.



In 1957, the first two EMM missionary families arrived in Saigon, Vietnam. This was the beginning of EMM's long investment in this region of the world. Eventually, EMM entered other countries in Southeast Asia, like the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, and a sensitive country.



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A close-up photograph of a person's hands harvesting rice in a field. The person is wearing a patterned shirt and a straw hat. The rice stalks are golden yellow, indicating they are ripe. The text "THE HARVESTED FIELD" is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters across the center of the image.

# THE HARVESTED FIELD



# THE SEEDED FIELD

In Mark 4, Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower in which he explains the fate of scattered seed in a number of places: the path, the rocky soil, the thorns, and the good soil. Sowing may require more persistence, until the soil is ready for the seed to take root. Sadly, there will still be places in which the seed is still not given the chance to really grow. However, plants cannot grow if they aren't sown. This is the critical work of EMM workers who go out around the world and try to bring the good news of Jesus to people who have not heard this message of hope.

**In places like Central Europe, EMM workers are creatively sowing seed among people who are now living in a post-Christendom environment.** For missiological purposes, we define Central Europe as nations in the geographic center of Europe that were not part of the Soviet Union but were influenced by communism and now have significant non-religious populations. In 1951, EMM workers in Luxembourg found an incredible way to reach past the Iron Curtain and share the gospel via a radio program with people in places like East Germany, Hungary, and Poland.

Decades after this first effort to reach people in Central Europe, EMM continued to send workers to different locations with a goal of sharing the good news of Jesus with people who did not have a relationship with Him. Today, our team serves in places like Germany, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Albania with ministry to people from Muslim backgrounds, post-Christendom Europeans, and refugees.

## LICATION

Multiplication is developing leaders. Our own, nor do we want to try to do more workers to help in preparing the sprouts, and harvesting the fields. Support for us to be able to invest in and around the world. **When you're not only helping to fund EMM's sending capacity, but our combined efforts to workers who will continue in God with us in local work.**

**West Africa is home to hundreds of least-reached people groups, including animistic peoples and Muslims.** One of these is the Mandinka people, numbering over 2 million in West Africa, with less than 1% identifying as Christians. Mission agencies have traditionally focused on coastal areas — many inland villages remain least-reached. These countries have some of the lowest GDP in the world, with most of the population living below the poverty line.

This mission work began in West Africa with a focus on establishing communities of faith and training local leaders. The ministry successfully adapted to local customs while laying the foundation for the Mennonite Church of West Africa. This enduring church body continues its work today under the direction of the indigenous leaders developed through the efforts of missionary Beryl Forrester, who remained committed to the region until his death in 2021.

Today, the Mennonite Church West Africa has a vision to be a church planting movement throughout the region. In fact, this burgeoning network of churches began in The Gambia and has grown into Guinea-Bissau and Guinea (Conakry) with a goal of reaching into other nations in West Africa. These churches are growing, thriving, and discipling leaders, along with support from EMM workers.

# THE SPROUTED FIELD



Eastern Mennonite Missions

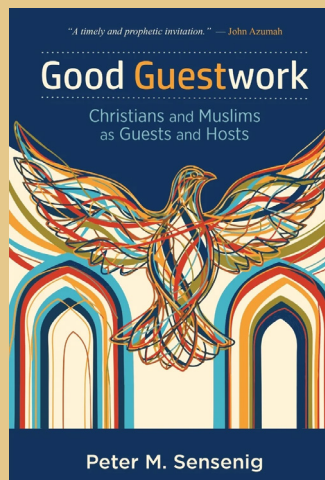
PO Box 8617

Lancaster, PA 17604-8617 US

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, SOW THE SEEDS OF HOPE

Learn more  
inside.



**Peter M. Sensenig, and his spouse, Christy, serve with EMM and MMN in France. They are also members of EMM's Christian-Muslim Relations Team.**

*Jesus walks the edges.* Wherever centers form, the calling of Jesus becomes clearer: find me at the margins. For Christians and Muslims caught up in the struggle for control - political power, cultural superiority, numbers - this book is an invitation to a better path.

And the key is simple: become guests of one another. Good guestwork teaches us to be better peacemakers. It frees us from the traps of violence, rigid identities, and competition. It delivers us from false and half gospels. It gives us fresh courage and creativity to witness to our faith. Good guestwork also makes us into better hosts. We come to the Scriptures with new eyes, and find both our neighbors and ourselves on its pages.

Most important of all, becoming strangers allows us to witness genuine miracles: relationships between Muslims and Christians transformed from hostility to love. The author draws from personal experiences of pain and joy as a guest in Somaliland, Zanzibar, Chad, Iran, and more. Peacemakers in Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Indonesia give insight into the power of good guestwork.

**ORDER A COPY OF THIS BOOK ONLINE  
SANTOSBOOKS.ORG**

## CELEBRATING LEGACIES



Ruth A. (Sensenig) Kopp, 87, of Thomasville, Pa., went home to be with the Lord on October 18. Ruth did EMM Voluntary Service from 1961 to 1962. She also served with EMM in Ethiopia from 1967 to 1970 and in Tanzania from 1973 to 1976.



Laura S. Kurtz, 95, of Lititz, Pa., went to be with the Lord on October 20. Laura served with EMM in Tanzania from 1958 to 1985 and in China from 1985 to 1988.



Elizabeth King Rohrer, 93, of Lititz, Pa., went to be with the Lord on November 8. Elizabeth and her husband, Raymond, served with EMM Home Missions in Lancaster, Pa., from 1973 to 1981.

Communications director: Micah Brickner  
Digital communications coordinator: Julia Tsai

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# DECEMBER DAILY PRAYER

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

- 1 | Join Gerry and Donna Keener in prayer for the recently formed Evangelical Peacebuilding Team in Vietnam to grow skills in coaching and mediation to effectively guide people through conflict in order to experience reconciled relationships in marriages, families, and in the church.
- 2 | Pray for William Higgins as he prepares to teach in March in Vietnam, including a new course on the Gospel of Mark. Pray that things will go well and that the material will equip and bless the students and leaders who gather.
- 3 | Pray for the Burmese people living in Cambodia. The Burmese are predominantly Buddhist. The traditional goal in Buddhism is to seek the middle path to nirvana, or the ultimate peace. Pray that they would encounter Christ and find peace in him.
- 4 | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.
- 5 | Pray for workers to be called to Thailand, to work with displaced people from Myanmar.
- 6 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young adults to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Southeast Asia.

## LANCASTER, PA.

- 7 | Pray for discernment and connections for Jan Heindel as she seeks partners and opportunities to offer spiritual care to local and expat communities.
- 8 | Ask God to empower the EMM Finance Team to wrap up the year well in work and in personal health.
- 9 | Pray for God to move his people to give generously to the Impact Fund at the end of the year to cover EMM's financial needs for 2025.
- 10 | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, PA.
- 11 | Ask the Lord to fulfill the various staffing needs for the EMM central administrative office.

## CENTRAL EUROPE

- 12 | Pray that God would give Vojta and Stacy Prkovi local teammates in the Czech Republic for a closer connection in church planting.

13 | Pray for Kazakhs living in the Czech Republic. Their tribal culture is waning in urban locations like those in the Czech Republic. Pray that they would find Christ, and be able to ultimately identify in him.

14 | Pray for the Indonesian people, most of whom are Sunni Muslims, living in Germany. Most Indonesians in Germany are there for education or for work. Pray that they would be curious about Jesus and seek answers to their questions.

15 | Pray for the Bosniak peoples living in the Czech Republic, for most of whom Islamic identity has more to do with cultural roots than with religious beliefs. Ask the Lord to reveal himself to them in a way that resonates deeply with them.

16 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young adults to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Central Europe.

## CENTRAL ASIA

17 | Join Elizabeth\* praising the Lord for sending some amazing and specific answers to her October request about her family visiting. From December 15 through 18, about ten local women from around the county will be meeting in a central city to fast, pray, and seek the Lord together. Join them in asking for God-encounters that lead to personal and wide-scale breakthroughs.

18 | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English.

19 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young adults to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in Central Asia.

20 | Pray for the Balkar people in Kyrgyzstan. In their culture, every aspect of life, from birth, to marriage, to death, is governed by folk-Islamic and Balkar traditions. Pray that they would experience the love of Christ and be transformed through relationship with him.

21 | Pray for the Kalmyk-Oirat people in Uzbekistan. Many practice shamanism which includes black magic and secret arts. These have been practiced for hundreds of years. Pray that they would find the light of Christ, and would be able to exchange those practices for trust in Jesus.

## WEST AFRICA

22 | Please pray for the people of Bonthe district in Sierra Leone, that the Light of Christ will dispel spiritual darkness. Pray that the Christmas celebration hosted by Nyandengoh! for children with disabilities and their families will bring hope and encouragement.

23 | Pray for the Northern Bullom people in Sierra Leone, one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. Pray that they would experience the life-changing power of Christ, and be empowered to share him with their neighbors.

24 | Pray for the Hausa people in The Gambia. The Hausa people are the largest ethnic group in all of West Africa. Pray for a powerful Jesus movement around them that can spread across all of the region.

25 | Pray for God to continue to prompt young adults to explore a call to missions through a mission internship with EMM in West Africa.

26 | Pray for Nate and Krystle Thorne and their children as they serve in The Gambia. Pray for perseverance for them, and for refreshing times interacting in supportive church community.

27 | Pray for the Gola people living in Sierra Leone. They are concentrated mostly in the small provinces of Kenema and Pujehun. A Gola translation of the New Testament was recently completed in 2020. Pray that work will be continued so that the Old Testament can also be translated.

## OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

28 | Join Tim and Julie Groff in prayer for more healthy employment opportunities in Belize. Many of their neighbors are unemployed, and many of the jobs that are available do not provide a living wage.

29 | Join Alan and Carol Wert in praying for the children who will receive free Christmas gifts from The Hive community center, Cardiff, Wales, where Alan serves as facility manager.

30 | Join Austin and Griselda Zuercher in prayer for wisdom as they guide the base's vision and the young adult staff. Pray for Griselda as she leads El Nido and for the young women to find hope in Jesus.

31 | Isaiah 9:1-3 foretold Jesus' coming and ministry in Galilee. Many people around the world still walk in darkness. Pray for God the Father to send his Son's light among them via his children, so that there can be great joy among all the people in his enlarging family.

*Some prayer requests adapted from [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net).*

*\*Names changed for sensitivity reasons.*